GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2130
ANSWERED ON:16.03.2005
POSTPONEMENT OF SAARC SUMMIT
Mollah Shri Hannan

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of reasons regarding postponement of the proposed SAARC Summit in Dhaka;

(b) the outcome thereof; and

(c) the efforts made by the Government to put it back on track?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED)

(a)&(b) India formally communicated to the Government of Bangladesh that it would not be able to attend the SAARC Summit in Dhaka on the scheduled dates of 6-7 February, 2005. This decision was taken against the background of recent developments in our neighbourhood, which had caused us grave concern, as well as the deterioration in the security situation in Dhaka following the fatal attack on the former Finance Minister of Bangladesh, Mr. S.A.M.S. Kibria. In our assessment, it is only in an environment free from political turmoil and violence that a Summit would yield the desired outcome.

(c) On February 2, 2005, when we had formally communicated our inability to attend the SAARC Summit in Dhaka on the scheduled dates, we had made a request for fresh dates to be worked out through consultations among the Member States. In discussions between External Affairs Minister and his Pakistani counterpart in Islamabad on February 16, 2005, the latter suggested that their preference was for an early Summit, and External Affairs Minister indicated a possible window during the recess of the Indian Parliament in March/April. Pakistan, as Chair of SAARC, is required to initiate consultations with the host Government (Bangladesh) and other member countries for identifying fresh dates for the 13th SAARC Summit which are mutually convenient to all SAARC members.